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Getting Green Done: Hard Truths From The Front Lines Of The Sustainability Revolution



Synopsis

Going green is easy and profitable. That's the common refrain from sustainability gurus. In reality, though, many green-leaning businesses, families, and governments are fiddling with the small stuff while the planet burns. Why? Because implementing sustainability is brutally difficult. If we're going to cut CO2 emissions 80 percent by midcentury, it will take more than a recycling program and some hemp shopping bags. We'll only solve our problems if we're realistic about the challenge of climate change. In this witty book, a sustainable business foot soldier with over a decade's worth of experience illuminates the path.

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Customer Reviews

Purchasing this title, I expected to gain insight into how to "Get Green Done". But instead this book is more of a rant on how difficult it is to implement green ideas. (I didn't need to purchase this title to know that.) I suppose walking in the author's shoes helps some readers gain an insight into the difficulties those of us who are facility managers, and other implementers in the environmental sustainability movement, have getting energy efficiency and other emissions reduction actions funded and installed. I did not gain a significant insight into how to overcome traditional inhibitors and boundaries. As a global energy efficiency manager for a major manufacturer, reading this text unfortunately confirmed what I already knew. I felt like someone was recording the last 10 years of my career, putting it down in text for all to read. I suspect that any active participant in the environmental sustainability movement, especially those working in or consulting for Corporate

America, will have the same opinion. All is not bad, though. There are some interesting facts & figures. Along with plenty of editorial commentary and viewpoint, some of which I don't totally agree with. But the point of an editorial is to share an opinion and initiate your own thought. I just didn't know this was what I was purchasing. Ignore the accolades the book has received, most being from colleagues and acquaintances of the author. Also be wary of quantified information, since the data that I'm familiar with first-hand is wrong. "Ford spent \$2 billion at greening its Rouge auto plant in Dearborn..." Auden, it was \$317M, not \$2B. Ooops! "...they decided to install a green roof...planted with grasses" Wrong again, Auden.

Auden Schendler's new book *Getting Green Done* is a kind of mixture of tales from the real sustainability front, a battle cry to action, and something of a slap on the wrist of those who aren't working directly on climate change, messing around with things like schemes to cut back on plastic grocery bags, use potatoes as currency, and sticker Hummers. It's a good, fun read (something we can all use in these troubling economic times), and for those of you new to the entire climate challenge, consider this book *Climate 101*---your first climate course. Schendler touches on most of the main climate topics (how fast it's happening, why it's important, what it might do to industries like his own, etc.), but he makes some excellent and very important points that have heretofore not been part of the green revolution's messaging plan. One is the notion that this movement needs more grunts than visionaries. Every person and his/her dog is claiming to be a visionary in the green space these days--what does that really mean, especially when many of them have just arrived in this space? I can name dozens of green "gurus" who've been doing this stuff less than five years and already call themselves visionary. (Oh really?) Auden also points out, repeatedly and quite successfully, at just how hard it is to change things from "business as usual." Even a lighting retrofit, which most of us would consider a no-brainer, becomes a lengthy, involved, mangled process as Schendler attempts one in the parking garage at the Little Nell hotel in Aspen. Ultimately, Schendler explains, doing this stuff is so hard that those of us in the sustainability community need to share the failure stories just as much as we share the successes. That's how we'll all learn, that's how we'll all improve.

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